United Nations A/57/582

General Assembly

Distr.: General
31 October 2002
English
Original: French

Fifty-seventh session
Agenda item 22 (g)
Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations: cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie

Letter dated 31 October 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you, enclosed herewith, the Beirut Declaration and Plan of Action, the final documents of the Ninth Summit of la Francophonie, which was held in Beirut, from 18 to 20 October 2002 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 22 (g).

(*Signed*) Houssam **Diab**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

02-67280 (E) 121102 131102

Annex to the letter dated 31 October 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon addressed to the Secretary-General

Ninth Summit of Heads of State and Government of countries using French as a common language: Beirut, 18, 19 and 20 October 2002

Beirut Declaration

We, the Heads of State and Government of countries using French as a common language, meeting from 18 to 20 October 2002 in Beirut, welcome the fact that a summit of la Francophonie is being held for the first time in an Arab country, Lebanon. Our presence in the Near East underlines our solidarity with the Arab language and culture, a solidarity that allows us to reaffirm the universal dimension of la Francophonie.

We have decided to devote the Ninth Summit of la Francophonie to

The dialogue of cultures.

We reaffirm the major role played by the dialogue of cultures in the promotion of peace and the democratization of international relations. This dialogue entails respect for different identities, openness to others and a search for common and shared values.

We wish to further intensify the dialogue of cultures and civilizations and to bring peoples closer together through mutual understanding, two objectives that we declared in our Charter to be among the priorities of la Francophonie.

We are resolved to strengthen the role of the International Organization of la Francophonie to that end.

We reaffirm our commitment to multilateral cooperation in the search for solutions to the major international problems.

We are determined to extend the scope of francophone collaboration and cooperation in order to fight poverty and contribute to the emergence of a more equitable form of globalization that will bring progress, peace, democracy and human rights, in full respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, in the interests of the most vulnerable populations and the development of all countries.

I. The dialogue of cultures, an instrument of peace, democracy and human rights

We undertake to strengthen the role of la Francophonie in the interests of consolidating peace, democracy and human rights and we invite the Secretary-General to continue his activities in this direction in close cooperation with francophone agencies and the relevant international organizations.

1. Peace

We emphasize our concern in the face of continuing violence, the re-emergence of terrorism and the worsening of crises and conflicts of every kind. We are convinced that the dialogue of cultures constitutes a prerequisite for the

search for peaceful solutions and will enable us to combat exclusion, intolerance and extremism.

In accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), we strongly condemn any recourse to terrorism and emphasize the need for close cooperation among all States and governments to prevent and counter this terrible phenomenon. We undertake to accede as soon as possible to all the international conventions against terrorism and to implement them; we call for the conclusion of a general convention on terrorism. At the same time, we must emphasize that all measures to combat terrorism must respect the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the international human rights instruments, humanitarian law and refugee law.

We condemn violations of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, the use of the territories of countries that have received refugees to destabilize their countries of origin, armed aggression, occupation situations, the destruction, pillage and illegal exploitation of natural resources and other sources of wealth and human rights abuses. We call on those responsible for such situations to respect the Charter of the United Nations and we support all initiatives or actions that are legal and in conformity with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 46/51 of 9 December 1991, and with international law that may put an end to them. We reaffirm our support for the United Nations in its quest for just and peaceful solutions to these situations.

We reiterate our international commitments concerning protection and assistance for civilian populations, in particular for women and children, in situations of armed conflict.

We undertake to involve the International Organization of la Francophonie more closely in the preparation and follow-up of the major international conferences on peace, democracy and human rights held under the auspices of the United Nations.

We reaffirm our total solidarity with Lebanon and its people in their endeavours to address the political, economic and social challenges confronting them.

With regard to the situation in the Middle East, we call for the immediate revival of the peace process on the basis of the principles agreed on at the Madrid peace conference and the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

To that end, we support the Arab peace initiative unanimously adopted at the Arab Summit Conference held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002; we consider it to be in every respect, inter alia as regards the principle of land for peace and the problem of Palestinian refugees, the most appropriate basis for the achievement of a just, lasting and global solution in the region.

We defend the primacy of international law and the leading role of the United Nations. We call on the collective responsibility of the United Nations to resolve the Iraq crisis and on Iraq to respect all its obligations in full.

We note with satisfaction that, on 16 September 2002, Iraq officially accepted the unconditional resumption of inspections by the United Nations.

We condemn the attempt to seize power by force and the calling into question of the existing constitutional order in Côte d'Ivoire.

We call on the Ivorian political class and the population as a whole to demonstrate restraint, to refrain from violence and to protect human life and property.

We support the efforts made, in particular by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to promote dialogue, the only path to lasting reconciliation.

We support the Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie in his continued action to assist ongoing mediation efforts.

We hail the birth, on 9 July 2002, in Durban (South Africa) of the African Union, which evidences the will of the heads of State and Government of the continent to enhance cooperation and solidarity among their States.

We welcome, in that connection, the adoption by the African Union of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the decision of the G8, at its meeting in Kananaskis, in June 2002, to back this initiative with an Africa Action Plan.

We request the Secretary-General to ensure that the International Organization of la Francophonie gives its support to this African initiative, which seeks to promote peace, security, democracy and respect for human rights.

We consider that the African countries have a special role to play in the mediation and arbitration process aimed at dispelling latent tensions and curbing the outbreak of crises in Africa. Accordingly, we support the mechanisms devised at the continental and regional levels to prevent, solve and manage the endemic conflicts within, or on the borders of African States.

We endorse efforts to suppress networks engaging in the unlawful trafficking and uncontrolled circulation of arms. We strongly condemn the recruitment and indoctrination of child soldiers, which practices particularly affect the African continent, and we reaffirm our will effectively to apply international instruments concerning children's rights.

We reiterate our support for measures to consolidate peace in societies emerging from armed conflicts, especially steps to recover and destroy weapons and to reintegrate demobilized soldiers, particularly youths, in a tolerant society which respects democratic values.

2. Democracy

We proclaim that the French-speaking peoples, democracy and development are inseparably linked. We are convinced that democracy requires the practising of dialogue at all levels of society. To this end, we are determined to implement the Bamako Declaration[1] on the status of the practices of democracy, rights and freedoms in the French-speaking community, which constitutes a step forward in the history of our Organization. This commitment to democracy must be reflected in cooperation among the French-speaking peoples, drawing on the positive

[1] Viet Nam and Laos draw attention to their reservations regarding article 2, paragraph 5, and article 5, paragraph 3, of the Bamako Declaration.

experiences and practices of each member State and Government. To that end, we are adopting the Action Plan annexed to this Declaration.

We also reaffirm our condemnation of all forms of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, which constitute nothing less than massive violations of human rights, as well as our condemnation of coups d'état and serious breaches of the existing constitutional order, inasmuch as they disrupt democracy.

Aware of the importance of the full and equal participation of women in political, economic, social and cultural life, we endorse the Luxembourg Declaration on Women, Power and Development.

3. Human rights

We emphasize the universal and inseparable nature of all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development and are determined to ensure that all citizens fully enjoy them.

For that purpose, we request the Secretary-General to pursue, together with the relevant international organizations, his efforts to promote the ratification of the principal international and regional instruments which guarantee these rights, and their effective implementation by member States.

We undertake, at all levels of society, to combat the impunity of those who violate human rights, by strengthening the capacity of the competent administrative and judicial institutions. We welcome the entry into force, on 1 July 2002, of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which will help to end impunity and make it possible to bring to trial those who commit genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. To that end, we invite those States which have not yet done so to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, or to accede to it as soon as possible.

We consider that, while respecting the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, recognition of cultural diversity may warrant the adoption by States and Governments of measures to protect persons belonging to minority groups.

We will promote the emergence of new partnerships between public and private initiatives, mobilizing all those who strive for the recognition, protection and respect of human rights.

II. La Francophonie, a forum for dialogue among cultures

1. Culture

We confirm our support for the open-minded notion of cultural diversity reiterated at the Moncton Summit and embodied in the Cotonou Declaration. We emphasize our attachment to the rich variety of plural cultural identities making up the French-speaking area and our wish to preserve it.

We consider that recognition of the diversity and uniqueness of cultures, inasmuch as they respect the values, standards and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and the International Bill of Human Rights, creates favourable conditions for the dialogue of cultures.

We stress the importance of the economic implications of culture and the cultural industries, a sector that generates growth and employment. We intend to foster its development and to provide a dynamic environment for the agents that contribute to it.

2. Language policies

We draw attention to the fact that French, the language that we use in common, is the underlying bond of our community and we reaffirm our determination to work together to further multilingualism, to maintain the standing and influence of French and to promote it as a major language of communication at the international level.

Underlining the importance of linguistic diversity in the international organizations and other forums in which we are present, we reaffirm our commitment to give greater priority to the use of French there, while respecting the official languages of States, Governments and international organizations. To that end, we request the Secretary-General to take resolute action to that effect and, for that purpose, we intend to strengthen our ties with other relevant international organizations, especially those representing the main linguistic areas.

In the spirit of the Cotonou Declaration, we likewise confirm our commitment to support and develop policies that will buttress multilingualism, in order to further among the population of the French-speaking area a knowledge of and also an attachment to the French language and partner national languages.

3. Cultural policies

We confirm our determination not to allow cultural goods and services to be reduced to the level of mere commodities. We reaffirm that our States and Governments are entitled freely to define their cultural policy and the means for its implementation. We are determined to defend these positions within various international forums.

We welcome the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). We endorse the principle of working out a universal regulatory framework and we are therefore prepared to contribute actively to the adoption by UNESCO of an international convention on cultural diversity, that establishes the right of States and Governments to maintain, establish and develop policies in support of culture and cultural diversity. Its purpose must be to define a right applicable to cultural diversity. This convention must also emphasize openness to other cultures and expressions thereof.

We instruct the Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie to set up, under the aegis of the Permanent Council, a working group responsible for contributing to the international debate, in UNESCO and in other forums such as the International Network on Cultural Policy (RIPC), with a view to drafting an international convention on cultural diversity.

We consider that, in the present circumstances, preservation of cultural diversity entails refraining from having any part in the liberalization of cultural goods and services at the World Trade Organization (WTO), so as not to jeopardize the efficacy of instruments designed to promote and underpin cultural diversity.

We are resolved to employ all necessary means to ensure that greater use of information and communication technologies does not widen the gaps within our societies or create new inequalities by encouraging a brain drain to the most innovative economies. Consequently, we undertake to support the expansion of these information technologies so as to reduce the digital divide in the French-speaking community. We will actively participate in the World Summit on the Information Society, which will be held in Geneva in 2003 and then in Tunis in 2005. To that end, we have decided to convene a ministerial conference of French-speaking countries on information and communication technologies during the current biennium.

We are determined to pursue the establishment and strengthening, within our States and Governments, of institutional frameworks, regulatory bodies and policies to develop the audio-visual media, circulate information, provide persons active in the cultural field with access to international markets and protect their rights.

We undertake to support the widest possible access to French-speaking multilateral television and to develop its role as a world showcase of cultural diversity.

III. A French-speaking community that is more united in the service of sustainable economic and social development

Controlling globalization and its implications imposes a shared responsibility on us. The dialogue of cultures, which makes for the mutual enrichment of knowledge and experience, goes some way to meeting the challenges of our times and to creating the conditions for sustainable development.

Poverty, illiteracy, pandemics, especially AIDS, insecurity, organized crime and ecological imbalances are scourges which isolate the most vulnerable countries and populations from development.

We undertake to combat these scourges by strengthening cooperation within our community and by establishing closer ties with the other competent multilateral bodies.

Convinced that education and training are essential preconditions for sustainable development, we reaffirm the priority given to promoting and supporting these activities.

In conjunction with the international community as a whole, we have subscribed to the objectives of Education for All (EFA) formulated at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2001, to provide basic education and enable all children, and in particular girls, to have access to compulsory, free and quality primary education which will promote their integration in social and professional life.

We are determined to strengthen the role of la Francophonie in these fields and undertake to work together with the partners for development to promote policies of education for all based on the values of equity, solidarity and tolerance.

We reaffirm the role of public authorities in planning and managing education and training policies.

We therefore call on the Conference of Ministers of Education to complete the indispensable process of reform as rapidly as possible to enable it to carry out its statutory tasks with a view to promoting the point of view of the French-speaking community in the international bodies involved in the follow-up to the Dakar Forum, creating the conditions to make our education systems eligible for international funding and performing its task of helping to shape the education programmes of the International Agency of la Francophonie.

We appeal for greater solidarity with the most vulnerable population groups and between rich and poor countries. We pay tribute to the key role played by women and young people in development and, following the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on children, we reaffirm the need for a common policy based on solidarity to protect the rights of the child.

We are determined to make an active contribution to implementing the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and therefore call upon the Secretary-General to ensure that genuine synergy is established between this process which seeks to promote economic and social development in Africa, the G8 Action Plan and the actions of the International Organization of la Francophonie, inter alia by participating in the preparation of the regional and subregional strategies being developed in Africa.

We call upon the international community, and in particular the economic institutions and the private sector, to help set in motion this new process.

We welcome the economic and social progress made by the countries of South-East Asia and the Pacific that are members of la Francophonie. We reaffirm that their attachment to francophone values helps strengthen the image of la Francophonie and give it a universal dimension. We therefore express our solidarity and support for strengthening of the cooperation programmes in these regions of the world.

We welcome the process launched by the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which was carried forward at Monterrey, at the International Conference on Financing for Development, and at Johannesburg, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the new round of multilateral trade talks in Doha. We shall pursue our efforts to combat poverty and extend our solidarity in the first place to the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island States to enable them to become integrated in the global circuit of trade in goods and services.

We are resolved to ensure that the Tenth Conference of Heads of State and Government that use French as a common language is a milestone in implementing the Johannesburg Action Plan.

By developing the cooperation which began with the ministerial conference in Monaco, we shall defend these positions in international bodies, and in particular those with economic responsibilities. We shall promote the effective participation of each member State and Government in the work of these organizations.

In order to create a Francophonie which is based on greater solidarity and is more enterprising, we urge the operators to support actions aimed at strengthening North-South and South-South economic cooperation in the interests of sustainable development in the French-speaking world.

We welcome the election of Mr. Abdou Diouf as Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie and undertake to give him our full support in the performance of his duties.

In order to achieve the objectives set out in this Declaration we hereby adopt the enclosed action plan and undertake to endow la Francophonie with the necessary resources for this purpose.

Ninth Conference of the Heads of State and Government that use French as a common language

Beirut, 18, 19 and 20 October 2002

Beirut Action Plan

We, the Heads of State and Government of countries using French as a common language, meeting from 18 to 20 October 2002, in Beirut, have just adopted a declaration solemnly reaffirming the key commitments which bind us together. Despite the fact that the Summit was postponed for one year owing to the international situation, we have resolutely pursued our cooperation activities.

To this end the Ministerial Conference of la Francophonie, meeting in Paris on 11 January 2002, adopted the multilateral Francophonie programme for the 2002-2003 biennium.

We welcome the guidelines issued by the Conference as part of the follow-up to the Moncton Summit and endorse the conclusions of the sectoral and thematic meetings held during the biennium 2000-2001. These guidelines should continue to assist our principal operator, the Intergovernmental Agency of la Francophonie, and our direct operators, the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie, the International Association of Mayors and Others Responsible for Partially or Entirely French-speaking Capital Cities or Metropolises, TV5 and Senghor University, in implementing the programme until the end of the biennium.

We welcome the fact that this programme is based on four major areas of activity where, we believe, la Francophonie can and must play an important role:

- Peace, democracy and human rights,
- The promotion of the French language and cultural and linguistic diversity,
- Basic education, vocational and technical training, higher education and research,
- Economic and social cooperation at the service of sustainable development and solidarity.

We shall endow la Francophonie with the resources necessary to execute this programme.

We particularly stress the need to strengthen cooperation between francophone States and Governments on the issues of priority interest to la Francophonie discussed in international forums. We intend to ensure that the common positions and official declarations of la Francophonie resulting from this cooperation are adopted by its bodies.

We encourage the Secretary-General to increase cooperation with international and regional organizations and redouble efforts to establish synergy through bilateral cooperation agreements reflecting national development policies with a view to establishing genuine partnerships. We also urge him to develop the know-how to make it easier to mobilize funding from international institutions.

We appeal for a strengthening of partnerships between our operators and emphasize the contribution made by institutional networks and cooperation between

decentralized authorities, economic and social partners and representatives of civil society in promoting a dynamic Francophonie.

To this end a symposium will be organized on co-funding for development.

We call on the Secretary-General to pursue the process of evaluating the operators of the Summits. We endorse the conclusions of the report on the follow-up of the evaluation of the Intergovernmental Agency of la Francophonie.

We are convinced that the formulation of a 10-year strategic framework will make it easier to set long-term objectives for la Francophonie.

We hereby decide to adopt four-year programmes which, we hope, will boost efforts to renew multilateral francophone cooperation so as to make it more streamlined, efficient and visible.

We call on the competent authorities to keep these matters under review until the Ouagadougou Summit so that, at that point, we may adopt a strategy for the period 2004-2013 and draw all the conclusions needed to formulate four-year programmes.